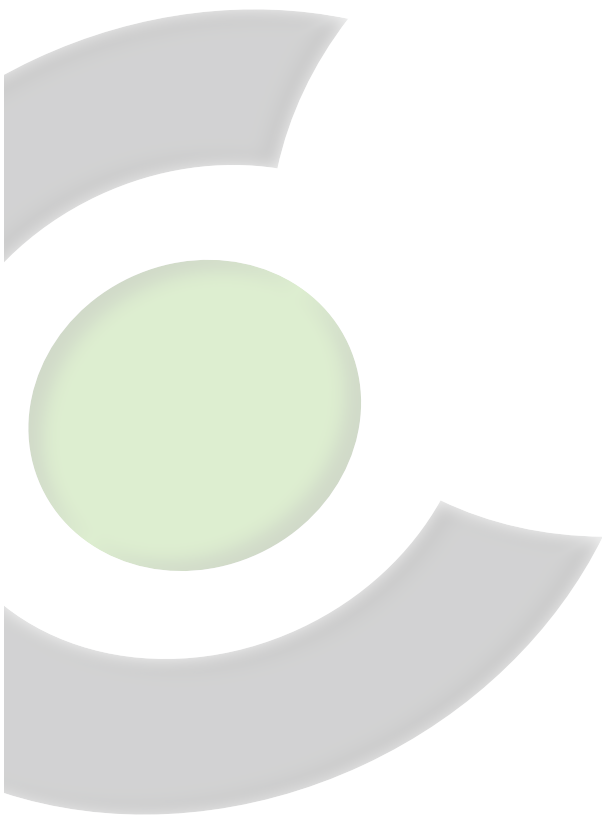


Planning Greener Events

A Practical Approach to Reducing
Carbon Footprint



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Planning Greener Events:

A Practical Approach to Reducing Carbon Footprint

Climate change and global warming seem to be on everyone's mind today, and for good reason. Organizations, employees and consumers alike expect their business vendors and partners to embrace sustainability, implement greener practices, and contribute to reducing or eliminating the impact of human activities on climate change.

Take a look at these statistics:

- **72%** of all consumers believe reducing climate change is important.¹
- **61%** believe that firms should be penalized for contributing to climate change.¹
- **56%** of corporate executives believe employee interest in sustainability is a significant issue impacting their company.²
- **66%** of senior sales and marketing executives are implementing green initiatives within the event function³

The growing consensus is that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is urgent to avoid a variety of climate related, planetary crises. Whether you believe the worst scenarios related to climate change projections or not, the specter of emissions targets and reporting programs - either mandated or voluntary - has many large organizations scrambling to understand, quantify and reduce the carbon emissions of their business activities. Relying on "random acts" of green and sustainability when planning meetings and events needs to be replaced with a more holistic and comprehensive approach to understanding and mitigating climate impact.

No two meetings or events are alike, so calculating and reducing a carbon footprint can be complicated. The scope, sources, and solutions can also be surprising. The purpose of this whitepaper is to remove some of the ambiguities and mysteries around carbon footprinting, identify general benchmarks and key variables, and assist event organizers in developing a strategy for tackling this critical green issue.

WHAT IS A CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR AN EVENT?

The term carbon footprint refers to the greenhouse gas impact - measured in the amount of CO₂ equivalent emissions - created by your event. But what emissions should be counted in your event, and how do you measure them?

Greenhouse Gases: what are they exactly?

The earth produces many chemical compounds that act naturally as greenhouse gases and help warm our planet through a process called radiative forcing. But a growing amount of these gases are purely emitted due to human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. Since the industrial Revolution, the concentration has been rising steadily, and United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that this will cause temperatures to rise worldwide in the upcoming century, with many far ranging and drastic consequences. Six greenhouse gases are monitored and converted to "carbon dioxide equivalent" (CO₂e) based on their heat trapping potential: Carbon dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O), HFCs, PFCs, and CFCs. CO₂ emissions have risen by 3% on average, every year since 2000.

In determining what to measure, greenhouse gas emissions are often referred to as scope 1, scope 2 or scope 3. In relation to events:

- **Scope 1 emissions** are those directly occurring "from sources that are owned or controlled" by event planners, such as work vehicles.
- **Scope 2 emissions** are those generated in the production of electricity consumed by the event. This includes the energy consumed at the event location.
- **Scope 3 emissions** are all the other indirect emissions that are "a consequence of the activities of the event, but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the event organizer." These include air and ground travel, hotel stays, emissions of the production and transportation of purchased goods, outsourced activities, and so forth.

¹ Ecoalign 2008 Study: Climate Change and Consumers

² BCG/Mit 2009 Study: The Business of Sustainability

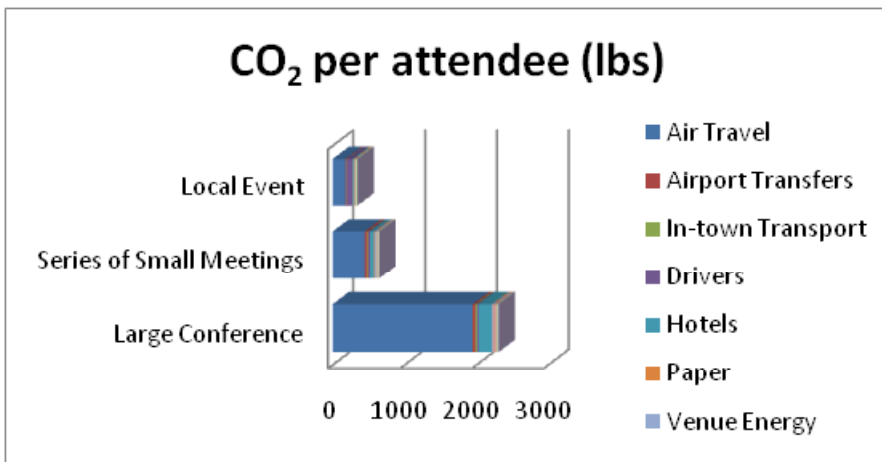
³ EventView: North America Survey 2009

Scope 3 emissions are the hardest to assess, track, and reduce because we have the least control over them. Simply determining which scope 3 emissions to include within the boundary of the event can be an important and complex decision. The emerging event standards encourage event planners to take a holistic look at everything from attendee travel to meals and paper usage when developing a sustainability plan and measuring their overall impact - or carbon footprint. The confusing part is determining the event planner's role in reducing the impact vs. simply encouraging attendees to mitigate. Whether you choose to follow a standard or your own best practices as part of your emissions measurement and offsetting, it is critical to be transparent, so that claims can be understood and verified. The discussion below outlines the different emissions areas and opportunities to reduce an event's footprint.

TRAVEL TRUMPS ALL OTHERS

Attendee travel to and from your event is particularly impactful. In fact, if a majority of attendees are flying, these emissions can take up to 80% of your overall footprint. The airport transfers and in-town travel can be another 5%, as well as each night of hotel stay. All together that means 90% or more emissions of an overall event can be attributed to attendee travel. Because face-to-face meetings are of course desirable, and often, most productive, it is important to select the right location for the event, and reduce the miles flown. With 10,000 people attending, your choice of location could mean as much as 5,000 tons of CO₂ emission added or avoided.

Typical carbon footprint for different types of events.



LET'S LOOK AT THE CO₂ GENERATED BY 3 TYPICAL EVENTS

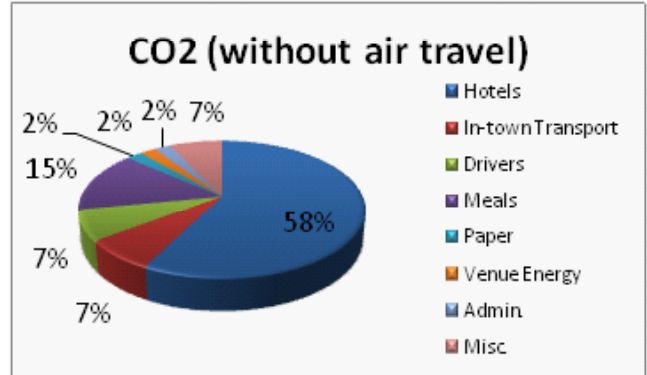
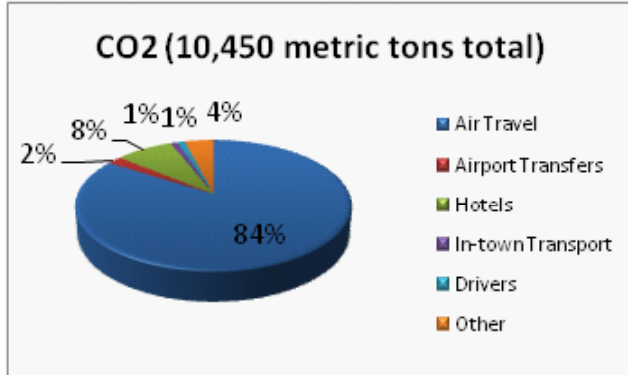
1. **“Large Conference”**: a conference with 10,000 attendees in one venue: the event is a 4-day event, with 3 overnight hotel stays. 75% of attendees are flying an average of 2,000 miles round-trip to attend the event, while the remaining 25% of attendees are driving an average of 100 miles round-trip.
2. **“Series of small meetings”**: a series of 50 meetings, 200 attendees each: 1.5 day events, 50% of attendees are flying 500 miles round-trip, others are driving 40 miles round-trip, each attendee is staying overnight for one night.
3. **“Local Event”**: a local event with 1,000 attendees, one venue: one-day event, 20% of attendees are flying 500 miles round-trip, others are driving 100 miles round-trip, 30% of attendees are staying overnight for one night.

Up and Coming Standards for Event Planners and Managers:

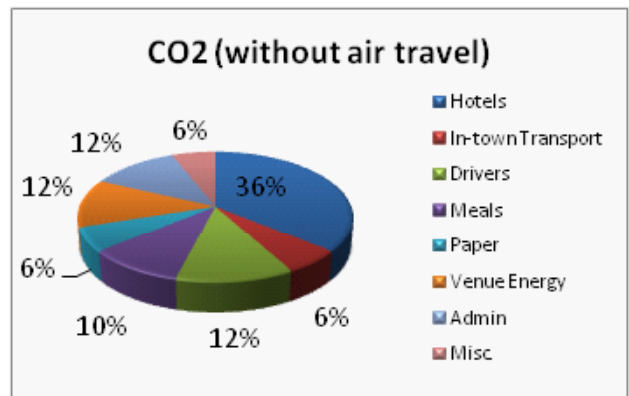
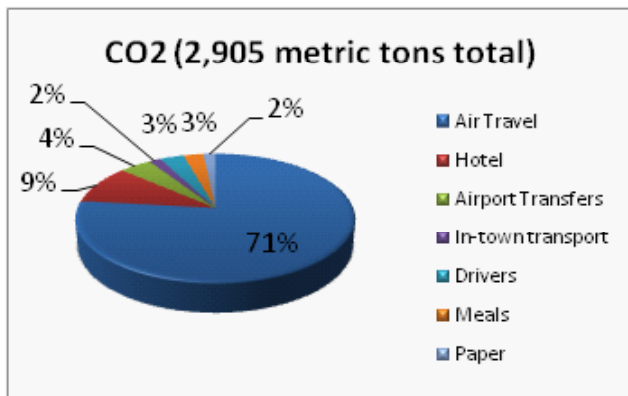
- **BS 8901**: British Standard developed by BSI specifically to move the events and planning industry in a more sustainable direction. Acts as a baseline and organizational framework for risk assessment, and puts measures in place to minimize negative effects of your events.
- **APEX Green Meeting Standards**: Though under review, the APEX standard critically assesses all aspects of an event from accommodations to communications to transportation, and scores your event on a green scale. The APEX standard is complex to implement and interpret, and is not recommended for the average meeting planner.
- **ISO 14001**: A more generic standard that provides requirements for environmentally friendly management systems.

These graphs show how the duration of an event, related travel, and other factors can significantly impact carbon emissions. As an event planner, it is critical to understand the footprint of each specific event to find the most efficient way to minimize and offset carbon emissions. With help from tools and professionals, event planners can focus on the right emission sources.

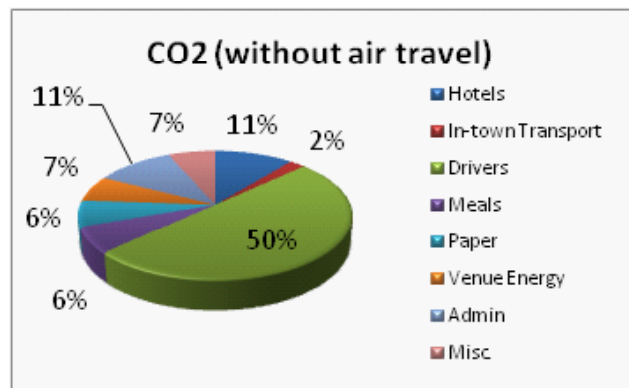
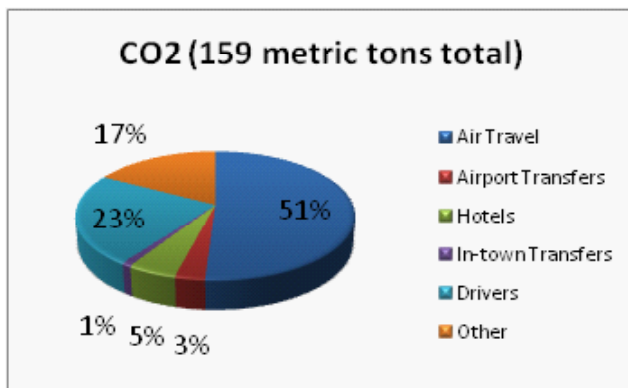
CO₂ Generated by a "Large Conference"



CO₂ Generated by a "Series of Small Meetings"



CO₂ Generated by a "Local Event"



Outside of travel related emissions, an actual event's footprint is in the range of 25-35 lb per day per person. A 10,000 person event is roughly **160** tons per day.

TRAVEL FOOTPRINT REDUCTION

Air travel: When many attendees are flying, selecting a central location can cut your events carbon footprint in half. Keep in mind that direct flights tend to be 20-25% more efficient than flights with connections. Finding a central and direct location can save 1,000 lbs of CO₂ or more per attendee.

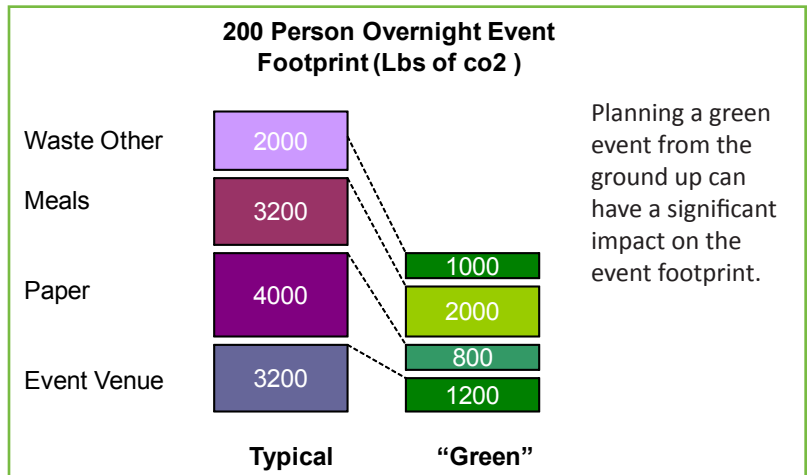
Airport-to-event: Airport transfer considerations can also have an impact. Cutting the travel distance and using vans can reduce this footprint by 80%, or 40 lbs per attendee. Software can help coordinate logistics by pre-scheduling and providing manifests for shuttle drivers.

Drivers: For events where driving will be the norm, optimizing the location and arranging for carpools can still have a large reduction impact. Cutting both drivers and mileage in half can save up to 75 lbs of CO₂ per attendee.

SHRINKING YOUR EVENT FOOTPRINT

- Set a waste goal and arrange for recycling. With some planning you can divert 80% or more of your waste from landfills. Make sure that the event venue(s) have recycling and compost bins available, and that they are placed in visible locations. Choose recyclable and compostable materials and avoid single serving items when bulk will do. Getting rid of bottled water and heavily packaged single serve items can actually save you money as well as reduce trash.
- Watch your energy use. Decide how much lighting you really need, and turn off equipment between sessions. Also be aware that the carbon impact of electricity generation varies by as much as a factor 4 by state (or country).
- Think about transportation needs. How will attendees get to your event? If you can, select a location that is central, convenient, and accessible via public transportation.
- Watch the paper! Events tend to waste a lot of paper, which requires trees, energy, electricity, and water to produce. Print materials and handouts on recycled paper, and use both sides when possible. Encourage emailing or web posting of handouts rather than printing them. Try to make banners and posters reusable. Ask vendors and exhibitors to take back whatever collateral isn't used, rather than throwing it out.

- Food and other sourcing: Providing local, organic, and vegetarian food options can lead to a lower footprint. Ask food vendors to minimize packaging, and arrange to donate extra un-served food.
- Let your attendees know about your efforts, and ask for their cooperation. You'll be surprised by their enthusiasm .



KEEPING PERSPECTIVE, AND THE ROLE OF OFFSETS

Some emissions are unavoidable, and often it is simply too expensive to make an 'optimal' choice. As an example, should a location be ruled out if it saves \$300 per person in travel and other expenses but results in another 1/2 ton of CO₂ per person? Saving CO₂ at a cost of \$600 per ton may not be practical for your organization. Planners also need to be aware of emissions shifting. Choosing a venue which is more efficient, but causes traveler miles to go up may lower your 'scope 2' event footprint while causing your attendees to raise theirs.

"Carbon Offsets" provide a mechanism to neutralize your impact and avoid being forced into these irrational trade-offs. Offset projects --such as reforestation and investment in renewable energy -- produce quantifiable carbon reduction. A third party certifier validates the project approach, and then the project is verified by yet another organization to ensure that the work is being done. You can buy shares in the project (in the form of carbon credits) by the ton, to match the carbon emissions generated by your event. It is crucial to select projects which have been verified by a reputable standards organization. ClimatePath endorses the VCS (voluntary carbon standard), CAR (Climate Action Reserve), Gold Standard, Plan Vivo, and Green-e (for renewable energy certificates.) These types of offsets generally cost \$10-\$20 per ton or less if purchased in large quantities.

HOW EVENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT

Using the right Event Management software solution can help you immediately lower the carbon footprint for your events by:

- 1. Reducing paper and mail by using electronic distribution communications.** E-mail invitations, marketing and confirmations, along with online registration and electronic surveys eliminate the carbon emissions linked to paper use and mail distribution. You can also eliminate the need to print and ship most, if not all, collateral linked to events and meetings with the ability to use web-based and electronic brochures, programs, and schedules.
- 2. Lowering hotel stay carbon emission by reducing the number of rooms for your event:** Event management software can provide a web-based infrastructure to manage rooms/roommates throughout the registration process, ultimately cutting the number of rooms needed for accommodation by as much as 50%.
- 3. Reduce miles driven through optimization of logistics for pickup and drop-off:** Software can help organize private transportation for arrival and departure and create customized manifests for drivers to consolidate logistics. In doing so, event planners can easily reduce the number of miles driven to and from the airport.
- 4. Reducing the space needed for the event:** With better planning options offered by software solutions, planners can easily review attendees' interest and session inventory, and eliminate or consolidate sessions during a multi-day event. Right-sizing the room to the demand can significantly reduce the space needed to hold the event.
- 5. Sourcing greener venue and accommodation:** With the ability to search only sustainable venues that meet your criteria, and to track the electronic RFP process, event management software can save you precious time, while ensuring that your eco-friendly considerations are taken into account during the sourcing process.
- 6. Allowing voluntarily carbon offset purchase through the on-line registration experience:** For carbon emissions that cannot realistically be eliminated, software provides an easy way for registrants to purchase carbon offsets during the registration process, turning their carbon footprint invisible.

CONCLUSION

Integrating green practices into events and meetings is becoming an essential function of meeting planning. Face to face contact will always be a critical business success factor, so finding a way to decrease the ecological and climate impact of these events is an important goal for your organization.

As interest and the need for climate sensitive practices is increasing, so too is the scrutiny given to the claims and approaches, particularly in the area of carbon footprint measurement and reduction. Using accepted standards and third party verification can help, but it's important to have a holistic approach, to quantify reduction activities, and to be transparent about your efforts.

There are a variety of steps that planners – and attendees- can take to reduce the emissions related to event and meeting participation. The good news is that balancing greening initiatives with meeting success metrics and budgetary constraints is not as difficult as it sounds. As this white paper has pointed out, many ecologically friendly activities simply mean eliminating inefficient and wasteful practices, and actually save you money while improving the overall event experience. And to go “carbon neutral”, offsetting can take care of the rest. With some advanced planning, open communications with attendees and vendors, and some help from your event management software, you can put your world class events on a more responsible and climate friendly path.

About ClimatePath



ClimatePath provides industry solutions to help event planners, consumer brands, travel providers, and other businesses measure and reduce the climate impact of their business activities. For event managers, services include scoping advice, footprint assessment, verification, and offsetting. More information on event service is available at <http://www.climatepath.org/forbusiness/greenevents>. ClimatePath has also developed a voluntary offset marketplace (www.climatepath.org) where businesses and their customers can research, select, and support specific carbon credit generating offset projects that match their values and interests. Project categories include fair trade, forestry, alternative energy, conservation, and social innovation. Tax deductible offset donations are made to the nonprofit ClimatePath Ecologic Fund, which acquires and retires credits from projects users have chosen. Using an independent nonprofit for user donations, combined with adherence to documented third party standards and verification for credits makes ClimatePath a unique and trusted voluntary offset marketplace.

About Certain Software



Certain Software is the leading provider of event management solutions for the global meetings and events industry. Certain's innovative solutions deliver to meeting and event professionals streamlined processes, reduced expenses, greater return on investments, and improved overall value of meetings and events. Certain's event management solutions support a full range of events -- from small meetings and educational sessions, to large conferences and world events. Headquartered in San Francisco, Certain has operations and sales offices in North America, Europe and the Pacific Rim. Please visit www.certain.com.

To learn more about Certain's Greener Events initiative, visit www.certain.com/greenevents